

## AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

June 19, 2012

TO: COUNCIL CHAIR ERNIE MARTIN

FROM: ALAN TAKEMOTO, CHAIR  
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE



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SUBJECT: AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE REPORT FOR  
JANUARY 2011 TO JUNE 2012

The Agricultural Development Task force ("Task Force") had eleven meetings between January 2011 and June 2012. Members of the Task Force during this period included Fred Humphrey, Charley Ice, Yukio Kitagawa, Ryan Lum, Jimmy Nakatani, Dean Okimoto, Kapu Smith and Alan Takemoto. Ryan Lum served as Chair from January 2011 to October 2011 and Alan Takemoto served as Vice-chair from January 2011 to December 2011. Alan Takemoto and Yukio Kitagawa were elected Chair and Vice-Chair in December 2011, respectively, and continue to serve in these roles. Ryan Lum and Kapu Smith resigned as members in October 2011. Presently, there are three vacancies on the Task Force.

### Definition of "Agriculture"

The Task Force endeavored at several meetings to create a definition for "agriculture" that could assist the City with regulating agricultural activity and providing incentives for bona fide agricultural uses. Of concern was that certain uses such as "gentlemen estates" have been developed on agricultural lands and we strove to craft a definition that would separate bona fide agricultural activity from other uses taking place on agricultural lands. The following definition of agriculture was adopted by the Task Force in February 2011:

*Agriculture is the production of plants and livestock for food, fiber, and energy including but not limited to fruits, vegetables, flowers, foliages, forestry, aquaculture, apiary, biomass, and seeds. Agricultural functions as described in Section 21-3.5, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu, will mean the active production of these agricultural products for commercial purposes to support the livelihood of the producer.*

Following the adoption of the definition, the Task Force collaborated for several months in 2011 with the Real Property Tax Division to incorporate the definition for agriculture into Bill 44 (2011) which related to the availability of real property tax incentives for dedication of agricultural land. Bill 44, CD2 was enacted as Ordinance 11-26.

**Agricultural Liaison Position**

For some time, the Task Force urged the Administration to create and fill the Agricultural Liaison position and we are pleased that an Agricultural Liaison was hired. While we can provide technical expertise, a dedicated full-time position within the Administration is needed to act proactively on behalf of the agricultural industry. Throughout her time as the Agricultural Liaison position we received updates from and provided input to Laura Theilen. We currently look forward to productive discussions with her successor, Duane Okamoto.

**Agricultural Related Legislation**

The Task Force monitored State legislation such as Senate Bill 1230 (2011) which related to exempting certain agricultural structures from building permit requirements and House Bill 2703 (2012) which related to food self-sufficiency. While we are concerned about exempting agricultural structures from permitting requirements as proposed in Senate Bill 1230, we would like to expedite the permitting process, and discussed this with the Director of Planning and Permitting. Regarding House Bill 2703, we contribute that constraints to food self-sufficiency include the cost of inter-island transport, food safety requirements, and relatively high cost of local produce. We believe that efforts to promote food self-sufficiency should be scrutinized and cautiously supported.

At the request of the Council Chair's office, the Task Force reviewed an HSAC proposal to require labeling and signage of genetically modified organism (GMO) products. We opposed the labeling and signage of genetically modified organism (GMO) products. We feel that GMO is a right to farm issue and process based labels are not the same as FDA labeling.

The Task Force also reviewed Bill 12 (2012) and Bill 30 (2012) both of which related to taxation of real property for horse boarding. The definition for agriculture was crafted specifically to curb non-farmers and non-ranchers from taking advantage of benefits intended for bona fide farming operations. As such, the Task Force advised the Council against tampering with the definition of agricultural use as proposed in the Bills.

**Mapping of Important Agricultural Lands**

The Task Force views the designation of Important Agricultural Lands (IAL) as an important step towards the long-term preservation of Oahu's agricultural lands. For many months, we urged the Administration to initiate the IAL mapping. We are pleased that the process may be underway soon. We look forward to collaborating with the Administration in the near future on the IAL designation process.

The Task Force intends to continue to provide recommendations for measures that the City can undertake to support the agricultural industry in its coming meetings.

AT:dm